

Remarks

Claims 1-20 were in the application as initially examined and subject to restriction. Claims 1, 9 and 12 are amended without adding new matter. Claims 1-20 remain in the application and further consideration and examination thereof is respectfully requested.

Restriction Requirement under 35 U.S.C. §§121 and 372.

Claims 1-20 are subject to restriction as not being so linked to form a single inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1. The requirement for restriction is traversed.

The Examiner finds three separate inventions in the application, to-wit: Group I drawn to a belting fabric, Group II drawn to a method of making a belting fabric, and Group III drawn to a conveyor belt. All presumably lack the same or special technical features because the International Search revealed references that anticipate or render obvious the special technical feature in at least one of the independent claims.

Applicant directs the Examiner to the limitation in each claim calling for the middle warp yarns to be effectively straight and inelastic to bear loads under tension without twisting or stretching. This special technical feature is the same in all claims and is an improvement in the weave disclosed and claimed in U.S. Patent no. 6,328,077, commonly owned by the assignee of the present application. The combinations are believed to be patentable over the references cited in the International Search.

Moreover, all claims are drawn to a combination of categories considered to have unity of invention under 37 CFR §1.476(b)(3). Group I (the belting fabric) is a product; Group II (the method of making) is a process specially adapted for manufacture of the product; and Group III (the conveyor belt) is a use of the product. Therefore, the application, even though containing claims to different categories of invention, should be rightly considered to have unity of invention and a restriction requirement does not comply with 37 CFR §1.476(b).

In the event that Examiner maintains the requirement for restriction, Applicant provisionally elects Group I with traverse.

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Any questions about the foregoing can be directed to the undersigned and the Examiner is invited to resolve any remaining issues by telephone or by email.

Respectfully submitted,
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/Joel E Bair/

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